

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 TRSE-00 CPR-02 SY-04 PM-07

NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 L-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 DRC-01 /096 W

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P 251815Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 745

INFO USSOUTHCOM PRIORITY

PAN CANAL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 3017

EYES ONLY GEN. ROSSON, SOUTHCOM AND GOV. PARKER, PAN CANAL

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PN, PFOR

SUBJ: CANAL ZONE CUSTOMS

REF: PANAMA 2942 PANAMA 2966

1. I VISITED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TACK THIS MORNING IN HIS OFFICE AT MY REQUEST. HE WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY. WE AGREED MUTUALLY TO FORGET RECENT INCIDENTS AND GET ON WITH OUR COMMON PURPOSES.

2. TACK BEGAN TALK BY RECOUNTING HIS RECENT VISIT TO NEW YORK AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF PANAMANIAN. HE BELIEVES THE GROUP WILL BE EXTREMELY USEFUL IN THE MONTHS AHEAD IN SPREADING BETTER AWARENESS OF THE TREATY ISSUES AND PANAMA'S POSITIONS THEREON.

3. AFTER FURTHER SMALL TALK, I TOLD HIM I UNDERSTOOD HE HAD BEEN INCONVENIENCED ON HIS DEPARTURE BY AIRPORT SECURITY PERSONNEL. HE RECOUNTED INCIDENT IN WHICH HE SAID HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO PASS THROUGH METAL DETECTOR THREE TIMES AND HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO PERSONAL FRISKING. HE ALSO SAID
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HIS TAPE RECORDER WAS OPENED AND INSPECTED.

4. I APOLOGIZED PROFUSELY FOR ANY EMBARRASSMENT HE HAD SUFFERED. I THEN EXPLAINED THAT AIRPORT SECURITY IS NOT HANDLED BY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES BUT BY CONTRACTED PROTECTIVE AGENCIES. I SAID THEY DO NOT KNOW A FOREIGN MINISTER FROM A SENATOR FROM A BRICKLAYER. I ALSO DETAILED SOME OF THE INTRICACIES OF THE INSPECTION SYSTEM--THAT A FINELY TUNED DETECTOR CAN BE ACTIVATED BY SUCH SIMPLE THINGS AS CHANGE IN ONE'S POCKET OR A FOUNTAIN PEN. I ALSO RECOUNTED A NUMBER OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN WHICH I TOO HAD GONE THROUGH JUST WHAT HE HAD--BRIEFCASE OPENED, TAPE RECORDER INSPECTED, ETC., ETC.

5. THE MINISTER SAID I HAD GIVEN HIM DETAILS HE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN AWARE OF. HE SAID HE WAS HAPPY TO FORGET THE WHOLE THING. I EXPRESSED MY PERSONAL GRATITUDE. I THEN SAID THAT IF IN ADVANCE OF ANY FUTURE TRAVELS HE WOULD LET ME KNOW HIS PLANS I WOULD PERSONALLY GUARANTEE THAT HE WOULD RECEIVE ALL APPROPRIATE COURTESIES. HE WOULD STILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE SECURITY CHECK POINTS, I SAID, BUT WE WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE IT AS PAINLESS AND EXPEDITIOUS AS POSSIBLE. HE PROMISED TO INFORM ME OF ANY FUTURE TRAVEL PLANS TO OUR COUNTRY.

6. I THEN NOTED I HAD READ PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THE VIP LOUNGE AT TOCUMEN BEING CLOSED TO AMERICANS, ETC. HE SAID THESE WERE PRESS ERRORS. WE COULD USE THE LOUNGE ANY TIME WE WISHED SIMPLY BY INFORMING PROTOCOL AS USUAL. HE SAID ALL PROCEDURES AT TOCUMEN WERE NOW AS THEY HAD BEEN BEFORE AND HE WANTED TO PUSH ALL THIS BEHIND US. I EXPRESSED MY AGREEMENT AND GRATIFICATION.

7. WE AGREED IT WOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL FOR US TO MAINTAIN CLOSE AND REGULAR CONTACT. I NOTED THE ADVANTAGE TO US BOTH OF TALKING OUT MISUNDERSTANDINGS BEFORE THEY BECAME REAL PROBLEMS. HE AGREED. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO COME TO MY OFFICE NEXT WEEK OR GET TOGETHER FOR BREAKFAST. I SUGGESTED MEETING AT THE RESIDENCE AT THE END OF A LONG HARD DAY WHEN WE BOTH WOULD LIKELY BE THIRSTY. HE AGREED THAT WOULD BE FAR BETTER. HE WILL CALL ME NEXT
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WEDNESDAY TO SEE IF IT IS MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TO GET TOGETHER.

8. I BELIEVE WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A NEW WORKING RELATIONSHIP AND A FAR BETTER UNDERSTANDING. LET'S HOPE THAT THROUGH THIS PROCESS WE CAN HEAD OFF SOME FUTURE PROBLEMS. TIME WILL TELL.

9. INCIDENTIALLY, TACK IS EXPECTING AMBASSADOR BUNKER AROUND MID-JUNE AND HE SAID THEY PLAN TO MOVE VENUE TO BOQUETE FOR A LITTLE VARIETY. I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE AGREEABLE AND MOREOVER THAT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA.
JORDEN

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